THE MAN AND THE MASTER

JAMES · E · FREEMAN

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The Man and the Master

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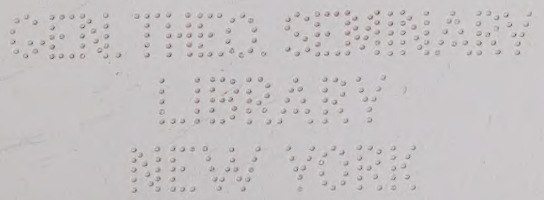

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To my friend and beloved Bishop,

The Right Rev. Henry C. Potter, D. D., LL. D.

from whose lips I have learned
often of the Man and the Master

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Foreword

THE following pages, suggested by a series of sermons preached on this subject, are not designed to set forth in any chronological order the Life of the Master; they simply deal with certain phases or aspects of that life and seek to lay emphasis upon its cardinal characteristics. To bring the divine life within the sphere of ordinary human intelligence is but to seek to accomplish and fulfil the Divine plan.

That Christ sought to do this, is evident on every page of the Gospel story. Indeed it was His very effort in this direction that baffled and confounded His critics; that He could come within the limitations of our life, be partaker with us of its conditions, experience its wants and its desires, feel its pangs and suffer its pains; all this seemed to the Hebrew mind to unfit Him for Messiahship. We cannot but feel, that the more intimately we relate Christ to every interest of human life, yes, that the more completely we bring Him within the

range of our own experience, the more fully do we grasp the rich significance of His perfect character and the more really do we touch, in a sympathetic way, the greatness and power of His Saviourhood. That He felt His kinship with us, is evident in every action of His life and every utterance of His lips. Even after His resurrection He joined Himself to His disciples in an intimacy that is as touching as it is majestic. He ate with them at their morning meal and talked with them of those large issues that concerned the future of the great society He came to create.

After His ascension, it was the passionate desire of these disciples to be so completely absorbed into His life, that they might enter even into the fellowship of His sufferings. To reincarnate Him, has ever been the longing desire of His children. To accomplish this we must bring His humanness within the range of our own experience. When we know the Man-Christ Jesus, we shall be able to comprehend the divinity of His perfect life.

A distinguished writer has said that "no religion is complete without a relation to every department of life, and no department of life

is complete without a relation to religion." We sincerely believe that when we have so intimately related the Man and the Master, to every department of life that the reality of His presence is evident in all its several spheres of service, we shall have realized the full meaning of His incarnation.

JAMES E. FREEMAN.

Yonkers, November, 1905.

Columbia University,
March 18th, 1905.

Having had the opportunity of reading the manuscript of the following pages on "The Man and the Master," before publication, I feel sure, if I may be permitted as a layman to say so, that every one who reads these essays will receive a deeper and truer impression of Christ's presence in every-day life and of God's influence as exercised in the world through His Son.

Throughout the essays the writer has emphasized what the Anglo-Saxon Homilists of old called, the "menniscnys" of our Saviour, which the author has termed His humanness and in which he has succeeded in a remarkable way in bringing the Divine Experience nearer to our own.

In the chapter on the Boyhood of the Master, one feels that he is walking with the youthful Jesus through the streets of Nazareth or over the hills blessed by His footsteps, and His youth with its sacred lessons becomes part of the life to-day. The Gospel of work illus-

trated by Christ the carpenter is rich in suggestion for all who labor. I was particularly interested in Christ the Teacher, whose teaching so far transcends all other exponents of truth, Classical or Oriental, and I have studied them, as to make it easy to understand how the world is drawing daily nearer to Him. The chapter on the Divine Reformer is vivid in its portrayal of the way in which the newer rule succeeded the older law in the guidance of men's lives: the tender sympathy of Christ the Friend, the comforting assurance of Christ the Liberator, and the promise of eternal hope in Christ the Saviour, are all presented in such a manner as to make crystal clear the identity of human interests with the Divine.

The breadth and scope of the descriptive sketches, the richness, variety and aptness of the illustrations, and above all the writer's attitude towards the entire subject, combine to add value to this picture of Him who before time began was the Saviour of Mankind.

A. V. Williams Jackson.

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JESUS CHRIST—HIS BOYHOOD AND HOME

"No more venerable form has dawned upon the horizon of history than the person of Jesus Christ. The simple course of time has placed Him above all, leaving nothing visible that can approach Him. By the consent of all, even of those who do not believe in Him, Jesus Christ is a good man, a sage, an elect, an incomparable personage. He has done such great, such holy things, that even His enemies pay constant homage to His work and to His person."

—*Lacordaire.*

"Once in the world's history was born a MAN. Once in the roll of ages, out of innumerable failures, from the stock of human nature one bud developed itself into a faultless flower. One perfect specimen of humanity has God exhibited on the earth." —*Frederick W. Robertson.*

BOYHOOD AND HOME—THE DAWN OF DESTINY

"How is it that ye sought Me? wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?"

"And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them."—ST. LUKE 2 : 49–51.

AT the beginning of his singular story of the Life of Jesus, Ernest Renan says: "The chief event in the world's history is the revolution by which the noblest portion of humanity passed from the ancient religions, comprised under the name Paganism, to a religion based on a divine unity, and the incarnation of the Son of God." It is a strange and suggestive tribute to the place that Jesus of Nazareth occupies among all the world's great religious teachers, and coming as it does from so unexpected a source, it is bound to challenge our attention.

That the life of this Man of sorrows is commanding a larger and deeper study to-day than ever before, and that the world is coming to a fuller apprehension of its vast meaning, is a

fact beyond all dispute. Jesus Christ is being studied afresh as the world's ideal type of the perfect Man, and through the study of His humanity we are coming to a clearer vision of His Divinity. If He lived among His kinsmen in that far-away age and was without honor or preferment among His own countrymen, He is occupying to-day the central place in the world's horoscope. Not only is His philosophy and His splendid teaching exercising a larger sway over the hearts of men, but His blessed person, His faultless manhood is coming to be the focal point upon which the world's vision is fixed and its aspiration centred. Utilitarian and materialistic as the present period may be, it has placed a larger value upon the Man, Christ Jesus, than any that has gone before, and out of the closer study of His person and the more critical examination of His teachings, it is bound to come to a larger emulation of His life.

The facts that bear upon the childhood of Jesus are few and scant, and yet they are sufficient to convey to us some impression of the early environment in which His youth and early manhood were passed.

Nazareth may not rank with the cities and towns of the ancient world, there is little about the history of this unimportant place to command our interest; Jerusalem, Capernaum, and a number of other places outrank it as centres of commerce and learning; Rome and Athens overshadow it upon the page of history; no one would have paused to study the inconspicuous town with its provincial population, and yet it has become at length the very centre and heart of the world's curious and reverent attention.

Situated as it was, among the most southerly of the lime-stone hills of the Lebanon range, a City "set upon a hill," it had an eminence of sixteen hundred feet above the level of the sea. Although but three days, or eighty miles' journey by caravan from Jerusalem, it was sufficiently independent to have its own synagogue. It was here in this temple of worship that He declared Himself the fulfilment of Prophecy. The people of the place among whom Jesus grew up, might very properly be described as the Puritans among the Hebrew people; the Nazarite was the "consecrated one," a man of singular devotion, upon whom

the strictest religious vows were imposed. Among these rigorists and in a home that was essentially strict in its discipline, Jesus was reared. What the effect of this home-environment was, how He felt its constraining and restraining influence, how it affected His thought, life, and His conception of duty and obligation, is evident in the few active years of His public ministry. Provincial as the town was, it was nevertheless something of a cosmopolitan centre. Here, the traders from distant parts, Romans, Greeks, Arabs and Phœnicians, came to barter and to sell. The influence of the mighty Roman Empire was felt and its severe yoke served to chafe and arouse the resentment of these simple village folk. Doubtless Christ had often heard in the market-place or even at His fireside, expressions of the contempt in which His own people held the autocratic power of Rome. The whole environment of Nazareth was one that must have filled Him with patriotic zeal and admiration for a people, that had hitherto been distinguished in the great field of action. The story of the heroism and genius of those great leaders, the Maccabees; the oft-repeated

tales of Israel's Shepherd-king and poet, David; the never-fading records of her statesmen-prophets, all these found peculiar inspiration from the setting in which His life was cast. From Nazareth's hill He could overlook the plains on which the great Founder of the Hebrew dynasty, Abraham, dwelt, when he was a stranger in a strange land, seeking for a city of permanence. Mount Carmel, the scene of the prophet Elijah's sacrifice and victory over the priests of Baal was not far distant, and a little beyond, He could descry the bald and barren mountain of Gilboa, that witnessed the last stand and defeat of Israel's first king, Saul. Within a day's journey He could reach the shores of the Sea of Galilee, where the villas of the Roman aristocracy abounded; another day's pilgrimage would bring Him to a Mediterranean port where He might mingle with the peoples of all lands. That Jesus was familiar with all these environments of His home, that He talked with the trader from distant parts as well as with the soldiers of the Roman legion, that He mused over the historic landscape or visited the scenes of His country's former triumphs and achievements, we may

reasonably be assured. We like to think of His boyhood fancy being stirred by the tales of the historian or thrilled by these scenes of historic interest. That He was taught by His gentle mother, the Jewish catechism, that He learned the immortal Psalms of Israel's minstrel King, that He visited with consistent zeal and regularity the synagogue that stood hard by, that He worked as the son of a carpenter, all this but serves to emphasize His kinship with us. It is of far-reaching interest that this greatest of men should spend the maturing years of His life, thirty in all, amid the obscurities of a place, that was of all the parts of Palestine the most despised; it furnishes another touch of the reality of His humanness. But in all this, He was following the ever-repeated tendency of all true genius. Great centres and cities are too sterile and barren, they are lacking in those fructifying and enriching qualities that contribute to and make for real greatness. Genius loves the haunts of nature, where only the whispers of the still-small voice are heard. Far from the great thronging crowd and amid the grandeurs of God's creations do they walk,

whose lives are splendid with the gifts of genius. The child Jesus, subject to the discipline and love of the home in Nazareth, unrecorded as that story is, must ever remain the reverent admiration of our imagination.

When at last at twelve years of age He was taken for the first time to the great temple at Jerusalem, when for weeks His boyish imagination was contemplating that long-looked for journey to the city of the great King, we may well conceive what His thoughts and aspirations were. When the day came that the family were to set forth, and during that slow progress towards the city, we can seem to see Him hastening on in eager anticipation to catch a first glimpse of the glistering marble of the rich Herodian temple that crowned the hill of Zion; and when at last He saw the glittering gold and the stately marble colonnade of the far-famed building, how His heart must have leaped with joy to be within its courts and to stand before its historic altars. Little did the people of that great city know, that there was approaching it that day one, who was to be its Master and its King. There is little wonder that, amid the surging

multitude the child became detached from His kinsmen, it is still less remarkable that He should have sought the courts where the learned doctors of the law were to be found. Here this prodigy from Nazareth awoke the curious interest of the interpreters of the Sacred Books; His questions and answers alarmed and confused them, they found themselves face to face with a new system and a new and Eternal Witness. It was amid such surroundings, that His mother and His father found Him. Filled with a natural astonishment, coupled with a touch of parental anxiety, the gentle Mary rebuked Him for His apparent indifference: "Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing." The sense of maternal solicitude, the expression of deep anxiety, the mark of authority, all this is evident in the mother's plea. That Mary was conscious of the awful majesty of the child of her simple home, that she knew that one day the tender ties must be broken and the boy assert His inalienable rights and take His large place among the teachers of men, aye, that He must rise to the full dignity of His

Saviourhood, all this we may believe the gentle mother had kept and pondered in her heart. But surely it must have seemed to her, that the time for this self-asserting was not at hand; with what tenderness she reached out to save the child of her deepest love from the awfulness of the great task to which He was committed; come it must, but surely not at this tender age. The touch of a true maternal love is here, the deep instinct of a woman's heart that forecasts the future, is evident in Mary's tender plea.

What a startling revelation of conscious power marks the reply of the hitherto tractable youth—"Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" It would almost seem that suddenly, there had dawned in all its fulness upon the mind of the boy Jesus, the greatness of His destiny; that, within the temple precincts there had flashed upon His vision the mighty tasks to which He was committed. In one single utterance, the child sums up the all-consuming business of His life.

The greatest crisis comes, when the light of destiny dawns; when in the fulness of a com-

plete consciousness we rise to the supreme business of life. That Jesus was fully conscious of the career that lay before Him, that He saw the whole of the service which His Father had commissioned Him to do, even at this early age, we are compelled to believe. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me," is the guiding principle of His whole career. From His first public appearance at twelve years of age, down to the last day upon the cross, He never swerved from the path that lay so clearly before Him.

We conceive that the lesson of His childish lips is as important to a right conception and service of life, as the later utterances of His mature manhood. To get at life's perspective at the *right time*, to see the great purpose and object of living, to know one's place in the vast mechanism of time and eternity, to believe that we are essential parts in the infinite scheme of God's order, this means to give life, not only definiteness of purpose, but the will and the inspiration to fulfil it.

We are told that, as Pompey, the Roman Emperor, passed out of the gates of Athens, he saw carved upon a column this inscription,

"But know thyself a man and be a God." There was a deep philosophy in the legend, and a principle that makes for the best and largest life. To come to our service, no matter where it may be, with the consciousness that we are destined *to* something, that we have a commission to *be* something; this is to give life, not only definiteness, but inspiration. The humanness of Christ's boyhood, the simple narrative of His early life, is of transcendent importance to the man of conscious ideals.

In a world of objectless lives, in the face of so much that seems to witness to failure, amid all the desultory tendencies of modern times, what an example the Boyhood of the Master furnishes. What cared He, though learned Rabbis with their parchments sought in vain for the prophecy of His coming? What cared He, though Herod and the Roman government conspired to make His way a path of thorns and the end a lonely cross? He had His Father's business to perform, He had the certitude of divine favor, He had the assurance of a definite object,—He must, in the face of all things, be about His Father's business.

Oh, for a life that has its conscious realization of a divinely ordered and planned occupation, a life that is not the victim of the world's caprices, that lives beyond the influence of environment or local tendency. Pope grasped this thought in his verse

> "All are but parts of one stupendous whole
> Whose body nature is, and God the soul."

To *know* that we are of God, and that in His great order we fill an essential part, that we are not, as Huxley maintained, chessmen on the board of human fate, but that we came here with a great plan back of us in which we play a part, is not this to make life something more than a period of mere acquisition of knowledge, or wealth, or power? These are, after all, but incidents in the outworking of the plan, there is something larger and better and nobler, in the whole scheme; we have a divinely ordered destiny to reach. Again, what a power and force life takes on when once it has come to this high consciousness of its purpose. The obstacles that once threatened to overcome and destroy it, seem to lose their terror; we are armed with a zeal and a power

of resistance that nothing can overcome. Show us the man or the woman that is conscious of God's plan concerning them, and we will show you a personality that is absolutely invincible.

True, there may be much that the world calls "failure" about such a career; there was, about the life of Jesus Christ, but a cross cannot crucify such an one. It was a mighty testimony that the startled Roman soldier bore to the dying Christ upon the cross—"Truly this was the Son of God." He was uttering the conviction of the ages. If Jesus Christ is the type of all true life, then His Father's business is the business of all humanity. He came to accentuate this great thought; life had lost its objective; men were striving for something that was altogether beneath them; to be satisfied with mere trifles that were utterly ephemeral in their character. To live without plan or purpose, or the thought that there was a great "divine event towards which the whole creation moved," was to render life empty, and to rob it of its highest and truest satisfactions. What a majesty there is in the conception that somehow, we are

incorporated in one great and world embracing scheme with the Eternal Father, and that His great ends demand our service. The world's supremest business is to know and love God, and whoever contributes to this great end is in partnership with the Eternal. We take it, that to interpret in some way the life and power of God, is to give life its largest fulfilment.

What a deep significance there is in the words, "there was a man sent from God," which were written concerning John: what a thought that, back of life there is the compelling power and energy of God. When once we have caught this lofty conception of our purpose here, when once the real interpretation of life comes to us, and we rise from our self-contemplation to the realization of our oneness with God in the concerns of His eternal business, how all life takes on a new aspect. Is not this the lesson which the Boy Christ of the temple teaches?

It was this new aspect that changed the whole tenor of Paul's life and gave such positiveness to his career. Did failure, and want, and suffering, and martyrdom mark it; could

not his enemies say that they had made an end of his missionary work? Yes: but while they were rejoicing over his apparent defeat, he was writing to his son Timothy from his prison at Rome, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

He had served his Master well, and the crown of rejoicing was assured. The guarantee of ultimate success is the assurance of the disciple who will be about his Father's business.

Armed with this consciousness, what can arrest the man or woman, no matter what their sphere of action may be, in the highest and noblest fulfilment of being? Jesus Christ is no isolated example, impossible of imitation, He is a type to which all may aspire. Every great or small disciple that has left his or her mark upon time, has been inspired by the same motive and desire that moved Him. Every messenger, in the pulpit and out of it, that has moved men to a larger consciousness of life's real purpose and object, has been consumed with this thought of oneness with the Father. Nothing is more pervasive or persuasive, than

the influence of such an one; Emerson had this thought in mind when he wrote: "all men are commanded by the saint"; not a sainthood that repels, but a sainthood that attracts: not a sainthood that is selfishly exclusive, but a sainthood that is heroically inclusive: not a life that is less human, but that is more completely divine: not less of manhood, but more of Saviourhood. Into this true and lofty conception of life's real purpose may He lead us, until the business of the Eternal Father becomes the business of all men, and life finds its noblest fulfilment in the service of Him whose controlling thought was,—"My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me."

JESUS CHRIST—THE WORKMAN

"The Saviour of men never conferred a greater temporal boon on mankind than by ennobling and sanctifying manual labor, and by rescuing it from the stigma of degradation which had been branded upon it. The primeval curse attached to labor is obliterated by the toilsome life of Jesus Christ. If the profession of a general, a jurist and a statesman is adorned by the example of a Washington, a Taney and a Burke, how much more is the character of a workman ennobled by the example of the Master."

—*Cardinal Gibbons.*

JESUS CHRIST—THE WORKMAN

"Is not this the carpenter?"—St. Mark 6 : 3.

THIS was the critical comment of the neighbors of Nazareth when their fellow townsman, Jesus Christ, undertook to teach them in the place of public worship. "From whence hath this man these things?" It is evident that the Christ had awed and fascinated them, for a time at least, by the beauty and wisdom of His words and the intensity of His deep sincerity; but it was only for a moment, and then this sad comment, "He could there do no mighty work," the prophet was not without honor, save in His own country and among His own brethren. The man who had plied His craft day by day among them, they could not and would not accept as their teacher. They had not yet learned that the "highest dignity of thought is consonant with the greatest humility of circumstance." It was no mere accident that Jesus was a carpenter; every Hebrew lad had to learn a trade, and it was in part for this that

the Roman despised them as a people. Christ entered into the fulness of our life's experiences, He passed over the same paths and through the same trials that His sympathy might be coterminous with every phase and characteristic of human life.

If the finer inspiration of the immortal poetry of David came out of the lowly life of the shepherd, then we may venture to believe that Jesus as a workman, wrought out much of the power of His great system. But quite aside from anything that His artisan career may have brought to His teaching as a philosopher, it lent to it all, that touch of humanness that has made it synchronous with every phase of human life the world over. There is a language which is of a universal character, that finds its text-book, not in the class room, but at the workman's bench. We all understand the language of the toiler, there is a commonness about work that makes us all kin. Paul as a tent-maker, makes a stronger appeal to us, even though his teaching and philosophy have the quality of a refined scholasticism about them, than he could possibly have done, did he not labor at the trade that made him

independent of all men. How far from the world's general conception of Him, was the real Christ. Art and poetry have been busy for centuries, spinning webs of fictitious fancy about His sacred person; much as they have both contributed to render beautiful His life, they have in no small way made Him remote from the common life of the world's people. We believe Jesus of Nazareth to have been a rugged, strong, virile toiler, in the great workhouse of service. We conceive of Him as prosecuting His daily tasks with all the intensity that characterized His later ministry. We believe that there was nothing of the ascetic about Him, nothing that suggested in any way His separateness from those with whom He plied His daily occupation. He stands as the simple peasant, the lowly workman, the world's master, in the humble environment of Nazareth. In this He is not unlike all the masters and geniuses of Time. A simple environment, a period of rugged toil, a life spent close to the heart of the people, these are the prerequisites of mastership. It is a homely but indisputable fact, that, a certain kind of adversity (if adversity it may be

called), seems to be necessary to the proper development of those qualities that make for genius. As there are no Royal roads to learning, so there are no Royal roads to genius. Jesus Christ pursued no ways that differentiate Him from other men, and the nearer we keep to this fact concerning Him, the truer will be our interpretation of His life.

The Master who, as the great French philosopher said, "lifted the gates of empire from their hinges and turned the streams of centuries from their courses," was a workman in the field of the world's action; and with reverence we say it, He came to His place of supremacy as the world's Redeemer and Saviour, by ways that are so human in their character, that all men in every sphere and in every clime recognize in Him, that which asserts His oneness with our common life. The first suggestion which His career as a workman forces upon us, is, that the true means of development are not constituted or affected by environment or circumstance: some of the fairest flowers grow under the overshadowing branches of the densest wood, some of the rarest jewels come to their crystallization in

the deepest mine. A barren and apparently unproductive soil under the irrigating processes of God's enrichment sends forth the finest grains. Blindness did not hinder the vision of a Milton, deafness did not blunt the finer sensibilities of a Beethoven, a prison cell produces the immortal allegory of a Bunyan, banishment and a friendless environment wrought out the Divine Comedy of a Dante.

Genius knows no limitations of time or place, and even persecution, like the harrow, is oftentimes the means of a greater productiveness.

Again, isolation or that form of asceticism that characterized so much of the life of the church at a certain period, is not the Divine method of life's largest fulfilment. Great as was John the Baptizer, his was not the life that woos the world; his wilderness vigil, long and unbroken, may have something in it that fascinates the Metropolitan crowds from Jerusalem, but it is largely the fascination of curiosity; Jesus by the closeness of His contact, by the warmth of His fellowship, by the depth of His attachment, makes Himself the brother of every man. That He knew the life of the people of His town, that He was in touch with

all that had to do with the interests of the occupation with which He was identified, we may surely believe. Isolation chills the springs of sympathy and makes unreal the expressions of affection. To know a people we must live close to their common interests; this He did, and it was the very environment from whence His truth drew its largest and most comprehensive utterances. One of the most menacing dangers of our modern complex life, is its tendency to segregate men into parties and classes.

The domination of any particular class in this world of persistent contacts, has been the cause of an immense deal of strife, disorder and revolution. The Collonas in one period produce a Rienzi, and in another a Robespierre. The carpenter of Nazareth, by His whole teaching and life, is appealing to our modern times for the recognition of the integrity of our common human interests. The law of unity is writ large on every order of God's creation; to disturb that law means to violate a fundamental condition of well-being, and to insure disaster. He who seeks to emphasize life unities, is a conserver of peace; he who makes

bold to sever by divorce a unity that has been of divine ordering, is a violator of God's law and a destroyer of human happiness. The very selection by Christ of the rôle of the workman, is suggestive of His desire to emphasize the intimacy between the high and the lowly, aye, to make evident His recognition of a law, wherein occupation can make no distinctions or discriminations. We submit, that Jesus as a workman discloses a wide variance between His conception and our practice in life. If He had been only the tractable child, if He had been only the splendid Teacher, if He had been but the stern Reformer, yes, if He had been but the uncomplaining Martyr; He could not have been the world's sublime Master.

It is the very humility of this divine life in its lowly service, the acceptance of a sphere of action that is universally common, that brings Him within the ken of all men. While it was this very humbleness of occupation that confounded the Jews, it is this that lifts Him to the place of universal favor. *The large concerns of the world are with the people who work.* It is not some exclusive and favored

few, who by circumstance and training are removed from the throbbing centres of human interest, it is not the mere scholastic surrounded with his folios of splendid thought, it is not the philosopher spinning out his theories, all too often impractical, that exercises a large and dominant control over human thought and action: it is the man or woman whose career impinges upon those concerns that have to do with a common experience, that moulds and shapes the destinies of individuals and communities and states. Such an one was this worker in the world's great vineyard of service, Jesus Christ.

Might He not have selected some other career through which to bring to men His great teachings? Was there not some other rôle more befitting One upon whose heart and mind such weighty tasks devolved? Not if He were to reach all classes and conditions of men the world over. There is but one life that reaches out to the outmost boundaries of human society, and that is the simple life: when we get beyond the pale of those primary and fundamental things that, because they are common, are universally understood, we have

spoken in a language comprehended only by the few. If we are to get closer to the life of the world, if we are to interpret to it the life of the Christ, then it will only be through the simple life of Him who was the Carpenter of Nazareth. What an incomparable example and ideal He furnishes to those who are sincerely and conscientiously seeking to ameliorate the hard and exacting conditions in the great industrial world of our time.

A second suggestion which this phase of the life of Christ presents, emphasizes the true dignity and place of labor in the formation of character. The disciplinary part of life is that which relates to its service. In the great hive of God's industry there are no places for the drones. From that early Eden day when God sent man forth to till the ground, down to the latest hour, He has brought human life to its best and truest fulfilment through the exercise of its gifts. A life that is unoccupied, that is freed by its privileges or riches from a real, active service, is a danger to itself and a menace to the community. The dusty paths of labor are the true highways to all real and permanent progress. If idleness is the curse of

a people, then occupation is its saviour. Work makes character, idleness is the art of fools.

James Russell Lowell has said, "No man is born into this world whose work is not born with him; there is always work, and tools to work withal for those who will; and blessed are the horny hands of toil." This gospel of work was enunciated and practiced by the Carpenter of Nazareth. When we conceive of work as designed for the mere getting of something, for the acquisition of the requisites of life, we have reduced it to a low plane. It was not for these things that Christ labored; He followed His daily occupation because it was in consonance with His whole teaching. Work is not money-getting, it is *world-bettering:* it is not drudgery, it is discipline: without it we rust. Every period of history that has witnessed to a larger development of manhood and womanhood has been characterized by an intense and virile service. As oxygen to the lungs so is work to character. Even salvation itself is not attained through some weak and languid and insipid kind of faith; emotionalism is not righteousness; worship in itself, apart from action, is not the heart of Chris-

tianity. Faith plus works, is the dictum of the Christ. To work out in some active and exacting way that taxes our energy mental and physical, our own salvation; this was the concept of the early church. That our occupation is in some intimate way related to our salvation, that it has to do with the making of our character, we are bound to maintain. How we lift up to its proper and highest sphere, life's occupation, when we get Christ's point of view. A day well spent in the busy centres of life, is a contribution not only to our own enrichment, but to the bettering of the world at large. Work and religion are intimately related, the one is sanctioned by the other, nay is dependent on the other. A splendid painter has a masterful conception of Christ, in which he portrays Him at the close of a day's toil standing in the doorway of His home with outstretched arms, with the evidence of fatigue written upon every feature. The shadow of His form cast upon the floor of the humble cottage describes the lines of a cross; it is the prophecy of His great trial.

What a suggestion it conveys of the relation

of His life as a carpenter to His life as a Saviour, the golden threads of service run through it all. His very fatigue as a worker makes His salvation more grateful to the world; for back of the utterances that are the very footing-stones of our faith, stands the Man of real experience, who knew the hard, beaten road of industry. Here our ways seem to converge and meet and the Divine enters into the human. Eighteen years of unrecorded action, and yet what an inspiration they furnish to the world's toiler. What a deep and tender sympathy that borders on kinship they present. If into our several occupations we could but bring the permanent consciousness of His sympathetic presence, if we could but prosecute our tasks, whether they be high or low, with the assurance that through these commoner things we are coming to our more perfect life, what a new meaning they would take on.

Or if again, we could but bring to these tasks the spirit He brought, if we could infuse into our obligations to others who may be in some way related to us in our service, the sense of brotherhood and fellowship that

marked His life of toil, what a panacea we would furnish for many of the weak spots in our great room of industry. After all, will we ever disclose any other method of solution for those great and anxious problems that threaten our peace, except through the teachings and practice of this life? The very fact that this age is peculiarly one of commercial enterprise, makes it all the more imperative that a God who is a Son of industry should control it. Jesus Christ, the Carpenter of Nazareth, is speaking to His world to-day as He has never spoken to it before, and the very complexity of its problems makes it needful that His voice should be heard. No, it is no insignificant fact that His own townsmen said of Him, "Is not this the carpenter?" Nor is it a fact of inconsiderable importance that He was a toiler as well as a teacher and Redeemer: we want Him to-day in the simple garb of the workman as well as in the resplendent robe of the ascended Saviour. We need His presence in all the teeming marts of trade, we want His sacred person in all the great centres of industry; we have a crying need for the Workman of Nazareth in those places where the

atmosphere of toil is heavy with the enervating miasma of greed and selfishness. Yes, we want in a world that is tired and worn with competitions and strifes, the presence of this Master and lover of men. If into the field of carnage and strife we pray for the advent of the Son of Peace, then into that far wider field of action, strewn with the tired forms and exhausted figures of a vast army of men and women, who are struggling for the barest needs of subsistence, we need to pray for the return of that simple form whose lowly occupation relates Him to every concern of life. Oh, it is not some figure made remote by our Sunday worship of it, it is not some Christ of portraiture or marble, it is not some Saviour of theology or creed; it is a living, acting, realized Master that the world is yearning for; a workman laboring with us where life is tense and its disciplines hard, that we need and must have.

How shall we realize this ideal of His ever virile life? Only by seeking to reincarnate it in our every-day tasks. Men want Him realized in us, they are asking us, not for our creedhood, but for our Christhood.

A Christ of the common people and hence of all people, a Christ who touches through your hand and mine the life of men where they need it most; this is a Christianity that is more magnetic and powerful than anything we have yet realized and we believe it is to be the Christianity of the twentieth century. Is it not such a real, living Christ as this that Browning describes in his noble lines,

"'Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for!
My flesh that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul it shall be
A face like my face that receives thee; a man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by forever; a hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee!
See the Christ stand!"

JESUS CHRIST—THE TEACHER

"The Christian religion, of all the religions that ever existed, is the most humane, the most favorable to liberty and to the arts and sciences: the modern world is indebted to it for every improvement from agriculture to the abstract sciences, from the hospitals for the reception of the unfortunate to the temples reared by the Michael Angelos and embellished by the Raphaels. It was necessary to prove that nothing is more divine than its morality, nothing more lovely and sublime than its tenets, its doctrine and its worship: that it encourages genius, corrects the taste, develops the virtuous passions, imparts energy to the ideas, presents noble images to the writer, and perfect models to the artist; that there is no disgrace in being believers with Newton and Bossuet, with Pascal and Racine."

—*Chateaubriand.*

"I believe that Christianity is the highest form of religion that has ever been founded in this world."

Wu Ting-Fang, Chinese Minister.

"Religion is not a method, it is a life, a higher and supernatural life, mystical in its roots and practical in its fruits, a communion with God, a calm and deep enthusiasm, a love which radiates, a force which acts, a happiness which overflows." —*Amiel.*

JESUS CHRIST—THE TEACHER

"Never man spake like this man."—St. John 7 : 46.
"He taught them as one having authority."—St. Matthew 7 : 29.

FROM His first utterances in the Temple at twelve years of age, Christ astonished men by His remarkable teaching. To Nicodemus, who sought Him as a great Teacher, He was so overpowering and supernatural, that this "Master in Israel" cried out of his confusion: "How can these things be?" To the Samaritan woman by Jacob's well He was such a deep, subtle revealer of character, that she hastened home to her friends saying, "come and see a man that told me all things that ever I did, is not this the Christ?" When the Pharisees sent officers to take Him, His speech was so powerful and irresistible that they returned saying, "Never man spake like this man." And when again He taught the people by parable, so striking was His utterance that they declared that, "He taught them as one having authority and

not as the Scribes." The surprise of the schoolmen was, that He who had never received the necessary training or discipline could speak with such power. They used logic and invective to confuse Him ; they asked Him cunning and crafty questions relating to state and ecclesiastical polity, seeking to entangle and entrap Him, but He baffled them at every point. A perfect strategist in the art of debate was the Christ. His sermon on the mount is the incomparable message of all ages and constitutes the basis of His great philosophy and system. A comparison has often been instituted between Christ and Socrates, and in many respects the two bear as teachers, a striking resemblance to each other; neither of them wrote, both cultivated disciples, both taught the philosophy of unselfishness, both emphasized the truth of life's immortality. But Christ's message differs in this conspicuous way from that of Socrates, or any and all of the ancient philosophers and teachers; these classic thinkers spoke from the standpoint of mere deduction and conjecture, the Christ from the sure platform of absolute knowledge and authority. They

speculated and their speculation marks the highest reach of human imagination: He never even hints that the thing of which He speaks is other than that which comes from a positive knowledge. So great and marked is this difference, that a distinguished modern writer has made Christ's moral self-consciousness the basis of a remarkable apologetic. What awful authority we find in such passages as these: "I am the way and the truth and the life." "I am the resurrection and the life." "I am the light of the world." Of this last statement a writer of signal ability has said, that the demonstration of this one single utterance through nineteen centuries of time, entitles Christ to the foremost place among the world's greatest teachers. Again, what an assumption of infinite authority do these final words of His convey: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." Every page of the Evangel is full of these expressions that stagger us with the vastness and comprehensiveness of their claim. There may be many suggestive and striking parallels between His teaching and that of all the great religious philosophers, notably

those of Confucius, Buddha and Zoroaster, but His is the only system that projects and contemplates the saving of the world universal. His conquest is designed to girdle the globe; all other systems are esoteric and exclusive. Into the world's tongues and dialects these immortal teachings have been translated, and they fit with an exact nicety into the life and habits and practices of all peoples; peasant and prince alike, glory in their priceless truths; He furnishes a distinct and clearly defined philosophy for each individual life the world over. Those who differ from these utterances are compelled to recognize their superiority over those of any other writer or teacher. Says Ernest Renan: "We must place Christ in the front rank of the great family of the true sons of God. God did not speak to Him as to one outside Himself, God was in Him, He drew from His own heart all He said of the Father." Spinoza calls Christ "the symbol of divine wisdom."

"How petty," says Rousseau, "are all the books of the philosophers with all their pomp, compared with the Gospels; can He whose life they tell be Himself no more than a mere man?

What touching grace in His teaching, what loftiness in His maxims, what profound wisdom in His words." Napoleon described Him as being utterly beyond his comprehension; after a careful scrutiny of His life and words, this master of men declared "He is great with a greatness that crushes me." Thomas Carlyle said concerning His teaching; "Higher has the human thought not reached."

From every land and out of every period do the world's great teachers and leaders come, to witness the consummation of all their hopes and aspirations in the simple person of the Nazarene. When we consider the utterly inadequate training of the early life of Christ, the barrenness and provincial simplicity of His environment, the evident poverty that debarred Him from the scholastic privileges of the academy, we are bound to admit that we are face to face with One, who cannot be measured by any ordinary human standards, and who cannot be understood on any lower plane than that of His divinity. That under the lowly roof at Nazareth He framed the highest philosophy of life that man has ever known, that He wrought out a scheme of salvation that

embraces in its scope, life present, as well as life future, this is a fact that engages the interest and commands the reverence of all men, and furnishes a hint of the immeasurableness of His character and mind. Jesus Christ as the embodiment of all truth, its source as well as its interpreter, is the Master-teacher as well as the Master-man. Certain cardinal marks or characteristics we note in connection with His teachings; we venture to say they are the distinguishing marks; namely, their universality, their authority and their tolerance. These are characteristics that peculiarly differentiate His teachings from those of other men. Some one calls language, "thought signals"; a picturesque if not altogether accurate definition. But thought signals are largely designed for local interpretation, they have their largest usefulness within certain definite limitations. The average, or even the extraordinary thinker, expresses his thought and adapts his philosophy to conditions and environments with which he is familiar. This is a peculiar mark of those insular or esoteric religions that were born in the East. Even the statement of truth is governed with refer-

ence to its adaptability; we note a very wide divergence between the teachings of men seeking to express the same fundamental thought, who are widely separated in time and place. Oriental philosophy and poetry and its general literature, have well defined qualities that widely differentiate them from the literatures and philosophies of the West. But while this is most evident in the teachings of men, we disclose in the teachings of the Christ, a quality and a power of transmitting thought, that render His teachings universally understood and universally adaptable. Spoken in the Orient, these words of His have to-day their finest exposition in the life of the Occident. It is a singular fact that the East, with its tendencies to stimulate and exhilarate the imagination, has produced all the great religious teachers, but in no single instance has it produced one whose teaching had the note of universality about it, saving in the case of Jesus Christ. The "thought signals" of the Master are not of local interpretation, they are not for the Jew or the man of some remote period or race, they are the easily understood admonitions and guides of all people the world

over, and in no place and at no time have they had so wide and clear an application to life's action as at the present time under conditions widely divergent from those in which they were first uttered. Yes, the West has given the largest and finest interpretation to these words that came out of the East, and in the West do we find to-day the stirrings of that newer and later enterprise that shall one day bring to the darkest spots of the far East, the light of the Sun of righteousness.

It is the element of familiarity, if we may so describe it, in the teachings of Christ, that brings Him within the ken of every man and makes His voice the best known among all classes and conditions of life. This quality in His utterances is one that we all too frequently overlook or fail to properly appreciate, and we venture to think that the deeper we ponder this singular characteristic of His teaching, the more profoundly will we be impressed with the Divinity of the One who can so completely speak a universal language. Human nature is the same the world over, yes, but how few, if any, there have been, who could so completely understand its every phase as to be

able to translate its deeper aspirations, and to furnish for those aspirations that which they supremely needed? Equally distinguished with this quality of its universal adaptation and application is its strong note of a positive and majestic authority. The very tone of this teacher fascinates us; there is always something peculiarly subtle and magnetic about the man whose utterance has about it the certainty of its warrant. If the great philosophers sprinkled the vault of night with the bright stars of hope and promise, then Jesus Christ lifted the curtain of gloom and mere speculation and ushered in the resplendent sun of the eternal morning.

If He had spoken with any less certitude, if His teachings had about them anything of a negative character, they could not be the guiding and inspiring influences of our life. When it comes to those things that relate to the deepest facts concerning life, we must have no word that is tinctured with doubt. From His first utterance in the temple at twelve years of age, down to His final word on the cross, there is a certainty and an authority about all that He says. His is a teaching that seeks for

no precedents; there is nothing in the whole realm of philosophy that has anything to add to its incomparable beauty. Not from the great prophecies does He borrow light, but to them He lends the illuminating torch that reveals their peculiar power; read in the light of His sacred utterances, the Old Testament takes on a new meaning. He plucked the fairest flowers of the world's most splendid philosophies and noblest religious systems and wove them into a chaplet of divinest beauty and placed it upon the brow of humanity. Here is a catholicity of inclusiveness that may well excite the emulation of the modern disciple to-day. Whatever is true issues from Him, and rising no higher than its source, finds its way by devious courses back to the fountain from whence it came. But whenever Christ blends with His teachings the conclusions of other men, He always lends to them the positive note of an unchanging conviction. He saw truth in everything, but an unregistered kind of truth; truth that lacked the final imprimatur of authority, and this He gave to it. Witness this in His teaching concerning the immortality of the soul:

the mere statement of the fact, or perhaps better said, the mere statement of the conjecture of the immortality of life, was no new teaching; it finds its repeated utterance in almost every great teacher and philosopher; but the thing that it lacked was authority. The beauty of the teaching of Socrates on this great and all-consuming riddle of the ages, is transcendently noble and fine, and his whole life takes on the splendor of his philosophy, but it is nothing more than the reasoning of a mind that is restricted by the same narrow limitations that hedge in other men; he can only speculate. Jesus Christ came to bring life and immortality to light; to give the positive word where there had been nothing but speculation, to dissipate the clouds of doubt and bring in the full-orbed day of certitude. He speaks here with an affirmation born of absolute knowledge and authority. Or again, when He declares the eternal will of the Father what a sense of security characterizes His utterance; He does not speak as a messenger, nor yet as an ambassador bearing some royal mandate; it is the utterance of the Father's own voice. Here in a very remarkable

way does He emphasize His oneness with the Father. No other teacher that has ever commanded the attention of men has this quality in his teaching; each philosophy witnesses to some law or system of logic in the outworking of its theory or the propounding of its dictum; it is never so with the statement or teaching of the Master. There is no human law by which we may disclose the processes of His thought; He does not undertake to lift the veil of His secret life; there are no marks by which we may follow the channel of His mental action; when He speaks, it is the word unchallenged and unchallengeable; a finality of conclusion is the distinguishing quality in His every utterance. In the most conclusive way He gives to the world, not to some isolated part of it, but to the world at large, the philosophy that in its minuteness and completeness touches its every experience and phase, and here as in everything else that He said, there is no other court of appeal. It was no wonder that His apostle, overwhelmed by the majesty of the Master's teaching and with the impotency of his own life, cried out, "Lord, to whom shall we go, Thou hast the

words of eternal life." Here is an authority that is as positive as the inviolable laws that rule supreme in the great solar system; so binding and arbitrary is it, that its slightest infringement produces a discord in the symphony of human life. Its very positiveness gives to our faith in Him a sense of security that nothing may dislodge. To Him as its great and final witness all the best thought of the world leads, and from Him as its supreme interpreter all the world's finest action proceeds. The need of the revival of this positive and dogmatic note in the teaching of the message of the Christ, is an imperative demand of the present day. It was the lack of the positive in the teaching of one great church, that compelled a distinguished priest to seek for it in another religious body.

What we find of the authoritative in the teaching of Christ, we also find of the spirit of tolerance. Great as He is as a dogmatist, insistent as are His demands, there is in His every word and action the large tender spirit of tolerance. Not the tolerance that temporizes with sin; not the tolerance that is politic in its action, but the tolerance that wins by the

largeness of its affection and the breadth of its comprehensiveness. Faber caught this spirit and expressed it in his lines:

"There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in His justice
Which is more than liberty.
For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind,
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind."

Jesus Christ wooed men and women, not by some arbitrary and severe law, but by a sympathy and love that broke down all barriers and dispelled all doubt. Springing from a race distinguished for its exclusiveness, reared in a home wherein the narrowness and bigotry of His people were emphasized, Jesus in every teaching and in every action, betrays a breadth of sympathy and a spirit of fellowship coterminous with every near and remote phase of life. Whether it is at the board of the rich and despised Publican or with the woman of Samaria, or with that other, taken in her shame and guilt, He is ever and always the tender, forgiving, tolerant Master. Not alone in some individual and isolated case does He

display this large and generous quality, but in the whole scope of His teaching is it evidenced. The reach of this tolerance finds its expression with the fickle and erring disciples, and again with the dying thief on the cross. Everywhere and in everything, His love transcends the cupidity and apostasy of those whose lives He touched. As He commissioned His disciples, it was not the spirit of a narrow and limited apostleship that He taught, but as a band of men who knew no lines of distinction and who sought for no marks of preferment, He sent them forth to disciple the nations. All of the parables wherein He seeks to set forth the scope of His kingdom, are charged with this comprehensiveness and extent of view. He would not "break the bruised reed or quench the smoking flax"; He would not even inhibit one who followed not with His disciples, because, all true and noble effort was kindred with His and theirs. In the grasp of His system He embraces all systems and all teachers; He came not to destroy, but to fulfil. Tolerance is at the very root of His whole method, and although it struggled long for supremacy in the teachings of His apostles, it

at last triumphed and lent its peculiar glory to their splendid conquests.

It was the spirit of tolerance that resisted not the buffetings and scourgings, it was tolerance that withheld the one word that might have brought the ministering legions of angels, it was tolerance that by a single look of rebuke mingled with deepest love recalled an apostate disciple on the night of His trial; yes, it was tolerance, that over a multitude that clamored for His crucifixion and a world that denied His impassioned appeal could cry, even in the hour of His agony, "Father forgive them, they know not what they do." It is this large and comprehensive tolerance, that for nineteen centuries of time and in every land has been drawing the world unto Him, and it is this that to-day is the distinguishing note of His truest and noblest teachers, who throughout the earth are discipling the nations and adding jewels to His diadem.

JESUS CHRIST—THE REFORMER

"The disciple of Jesus Christ has become the conqueror of the world,—not from the standpoint of materialism and brutality, for violence is not in the spirit of the crucified Master, but in the sense of goodness, of abnegation, of sacrifice and of moral dignity. In sowing these virtues as seeds of life, He prepares and enriches the human soil until it is capable of all culture and of all harvests."

—*Pere Didon.*

"The social art of living is learned, not in the school of polemic, but in that of the crucified." —*Brierly.*

"Who but will acknowledge that Christianity has become one of the greatest promoters of civilization? And wherefore? Because it has changed the interior man, his opinions and sentiments; because it has regenerated his moral, his intellectual character." —*Guizot.*

JESUS CHRIST—THE REFORMER

"It hath been said by them of old time ;—but I say unto you."—St. Matthew 5 : 33, 34.

A REFORMER might be described as one who breaks with tradition and customs ; a renovator of human life ; in an extreme definition, he might be described as a revolutionist. Among no class or race of people has tradition or custom found a larger following than among the Jews. The literalist and the traditionalist have their finest exemplars within the confines of Palestine. Jesus Christ by no means despised the honored customs of His people, He observed punctiliously their prevailing practices, but from the day that He made His appearance in the temple courts at thirty years of age down to the hour of His crucifixion, He was a reformer and re-caster of thought, and habits of action.

Christ is so generally represented as the gentlest and tenderest of men, that we lose much of the marvelous and splendid heroism

that characterized His life. From the first, He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"; the latter is a fair definition of the life story of every great reformer and leader. Emerson submits as his definition of the hero, a man who, "taking both reputation and life in his hand, will with perfect urbanity dare the gibbet and the mob, by the absolute truth of his speech and the rectitude of his behavior."

Measured by this standard, the Master is colossal in His heroism.

In his little book on the "Manliness of Christ," Thomas Hughes, the famous master of Rugby, describes the difference that exists between mere physical heroism and mental and moral heroism; and after submitting a number of extraordinary and marvelous deeds of daring and courage, he concludes that the last proof and test of courage and manliness is loyalty to truth,—"the most rare and difficult of all human qualities." So heroic is Christ, in Lord Tennyson's estimate of Him, that he begins his great poem, "In Memoriam," with the line:

"Strong Son of God, immortal love."

Any conception of Christ as a teacher, that portrays Him as one whose humility and meekness obscured the strong, masculine and fearless elements of His nature, is untrue to His real life. The flash of deep and awful indignation, the word of stern and fearless rebuke, the action, full of the force and power of His sense of right and justice, these were as evident in His dealing with those things that were false and superficial and vicious, as were His notable acts of gentleness and consideration for the weaknesses and failures of those who were dominated by sinful propensities. We know of nothing finer or more heroic, than His oft repeated attacks upon the hollowness of a system, that sought to cover with platitudes and elaborate ceremonial, the hypocrisy and shallowness of its votaries. In the instance of our text, Christ is declaring His great platform of action; it is the sermon on the mount.

Loftier maxims of living than He here states, the world does not contain. He is indicating in the immediate case, the difference between a mere moral law that operates from without, and a dominant and controlling religious impulse that operates from within. He demands,

not alone the compliance with a law that is designed for the general good, but the operation of an infinitely finer system that affects and controls the thought. The Jew was a ritualist and an externalist. The law he observed was autocratic and arbitrary: it was largely observed because it was autocratic and compulsory; hence he was religious because a civil and ecclesiastical code made a certain kind of ceremonial indispensable. For centuries the Jews had been rigorists in the minutest observance of their law. It was against such a religion, the religion of mere conformity, that Christ the Reformer leveled His first blow. There is a spirit here of sublime authority in His utterance; "I say unto you"; it is full of audacious boldness. Says a modern writer: "No reformer succeeds by asking little of men; the more autocratic is his demand the more likely is it to meet with obedience."

The Jews were first astonished, then angered by His teaching and self-assertiveness. They were all amazed, saying, "What new doctrine is this?"

It was a new kind of utterance and one

unfamiliar to the human ear; but beyond the utterance, was the might of His person, as He came into collision with the customs and practices that had nothing beyond tradition to sustain them. To submit is always easier than to combat; no harder or severer task may one set himself to accomplish, than to correct or readjust long existing conditions. Luther, following his humble habit as a simple priest at Wittenberg, might have lived a life of greater comfort and ease, had he not become the bold and aggressive enemy of the Vatican and Papal indulgences. Savonarola as the prior of St. Mark's, might have impressed his influence upon Florence as a consecrated leader and preacher, but the profligacy and viciousness of a Medicean court so aroused his righteous indignation and inflamed his passion for truth, that he fearlessly inveighed against the corruptions of his age and people, and paid the penalty of martyrdom for his boldness. To break with tradition and custom, with the consciousness that to do so means to incur the bitterness and wrath of one's own people, is an awful tax upon the spirit of self-ease and indulgence. That Jesus Christ experienced the

pangs of a bitter and harsh judgment and that He suffered from the reproach of His own kinsmen, is evident upon every line of the Gospel narrative.

As a reformer, He was not tyrannical or ungenerous; He did not seek to make life hard and ascetic, His was not the rule of one who is out of sympathy and touch with the largest and best that is in human life. He was only too cognizant of the limitations and environing influences that hedged men in, and that largely controlled their mental as well as their physical action. He knew what was in man; the good as well as the bad, the virtue as well as the vice, the aspiration after holiness as well as the lower animal propensities. Never has human nature had so kind and generous a judge, never one who so completely sympathized with its weaknesses or who sought with such persistency to give it the hope of better things. His judgments are always fair and His appeals based upon the enrichment, not the impoverishment of man's best and truest interests.

A champion of all that was true and pure, the espouser of any cause where weakness was made the sport of physical prowess; an un-

flinching advocate of the downtrodden and helpless, He was at all times and under all conditions, the Standard Bearer of the world's divinest truth, and its unexampled Leader in all that makes for human betterment. Oftentimes the religious reformer is one whose humanness is not in consonance with that of his fellows; a lack of real sympathy and a too remote contact with the issues of life, render many an otherwise strong leader, ineffective in his efforts after the world's correction. It was not so with the Master; He never employs means that betray a lack of fellow-feeling or sympathetic knowledge of the conditions that obtain among all classes and conditions of men. A world's-man in the largest sense, intensely human and yet perfectly divine, He met the problems of life as one who was in all points tempted, even as we are, yet without sin. No conception of the scope of His work of reform could be reasonable or fair, that did not take cognizance of this fact. He was a reformer whose work was coextensive with all that relates to life's every interest, and it is only by and through the realization of this, that we can rise to a proper conscious-

ness of His place among the leaders of thought and action. If He came to bring to men a truer system of religious devotion, if His teaching and His practice gave to the world its finest type of the life-expectant, then it is equally true that He deals with those things that have to do with time and conditions that affect the life-existent. All too often in our effort to reveal what He has done for the soul in giving to it the power of an endless life, we treat with scant indifference the work He did for the bodies of men in giving them their largest development and service.

There is nothing of the doctrinaire or visionaire about this Man of Nazareth; He does not deal with problems that, because they are remote, are of indifferent interest to men struggling with the all-consuming occupations and cares of life: Jesus is the reformer in the market place and at the centres of human life; nothing is too common for His hand to touch, nothing too unclean for the exercise of His purifying power. A future City whose citizens know no touch of contamination, is to be wrought out of a present environment where virtue and honor and true righteous-

ness are its indispensable requirements. There were two distinct courses that He pursued in the uplifting and renovating of life: the first had to do with the correction and readjustment of its religious practice and habit, the second had to do with its large relation and responsibility to the body social. The religious and the social were the two points of attack. In coming to a people distinguished for their religious habit, He sought to disclose the great difference that exists between mere ceremonial or external religion, and a deep personal consciousness of one's relation to God. The first is largely concerned with æsthetics and all that relates to the artistic in worship, the second is concerned with a deep sense of obligation that renders all life, in its every occupation and service, amenable to the will of God. Christ demanded *internal* piety and holiness instead of *external* service and ceremonial. Dawson in his fine analysis of the life of Christ, says, "He perceives that one of the most deadly effects of ritualism is to put external rectitude in the place of internal piety and virtue." The cleansing of the temple and His characterization of the religious char-

latans of His day as "whited sepulchres," was the unfailing attitude of His life towards all that was superficial and unreal. The clean hands and pure hearts, were of more worth in the sight of God, than nice discriminations in matters of ceremonial. To make clean the outside, was not sufficient; *that* served for the morality of expediency; the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and truth, these were the bulwarks of true and abiding character. His blows fell heavy and hard upon the religious practices of His day, and it was this persistent opposition that led Him eventually to the Gethsemane of desertion and to the Calvary of crucifixion. There is no picture more inspiring or thrilling than His descent with knotted whip-cords, upon the trafficker in the temple precincts. No more daring or heroic service is recorded upon the page of history. The Son of God, single-handed, with naught but the awfulness of His authority declaring the immunity of His Father's house from the nefarious practices of the tradesman, here is a picture majestic and sublime. Here is the true reformer plucking worship from the shamelessness of a corruption

that made rich the custodians of the sacred oracles. What a Master of situations is this One, nay, what a Creator of true and faultless devotion is this new prophet from Nazareth. To release religion from the thralls of sacerdotalism, ecclesiasticism and traditionalism, this was the reforming work of the Christ.

Again, what a striking illustration of the newer and truer worship is that which He sets forth as He sits by Jacob's well, tired with the day's long pilgrimage. No temple walls can mark off the boundaries or determine the limitations of true worship. Even the Herodian temple, rich as it is with an unbroken history of centuries, and that other house of worship that stood upon the hill of Gerezim, cannot fix the seat of the Father's throne. No localized centre of devotion may become the Mecca of those, who throughout the world, have equal access to the Mercy Seat.

What a striking and awful contrast there is between the dictum of a church that set as its standard, "Extra ecclesia nulla salus," and the broad, comprehensive, catholic inclusiveness of the Master's teaching. What mighty and far-reaching lessons has Christendom yet

to learn from this Divine lover of the human soul. In His presence "our little systems have their day, they have their day and cease to be."

Before His judgment throne all the pettinesses and strifes of party discord are awed into silence.

What Jesus the Reformer did for true and unrestrained worship, may never be undone, except to the hurt of His church. He lengthened its cords and strengthened its stakes, He widened the boundaries of its habitation and stretched abroad its curtains over every spot where men kneel to worship the Father "in spirit and in truth." For an exclusive and insular religion, He instituted one that reaches to earth's remotest bounds: for a party Shibboleth, He gave a password that opens the way up to the heights of mercy and forgiveness and unbars the massy gates of Paradise. Yes, Jesus the reformer of a world's religious habit, gives it bread for stones and for the empty form substitutes the true manna. He strikes at the very root of a charity that gives its alms "to be seen of men," and upon the widow with her two consecrated mites He

places the laurel of unfading splendor. Everything that relates to man's approach to the Father, He studiously observes and fearlessly corrects. What wholesomeness do we find in all these teachings of His, that emphasize the difference between true worship and false. What a reach from the Mosaic law of exclusiveness, to the Christ law of free and open accessibility to the great throne of grace.

The second conspicuous and signal reform that He prosecuted, was in the direction of a better civic and social condition. Jesus Christ is incomparably the world's greatest Social Economist. His definition of the two obligations of life as we find it in the summary of the law, expresses precisely the line of His policy. First, the right relation between man and his God, to love Him with all the heart, soul and mind; and second, the right relation between man and his fellows, to love his neighbor as himself. In all that He did along the line of social reform, we find Him quite as revolutionary as in His effort after a true worship.

The Orient is thoroughly infected, and has always been, with the spirit of caste and social

exclusiveness. The Jew stood with great persistency for classification and division; the contempt in which Nazareth was held illustrates this; there was even a tribal exclusiveness. Samaria was an outcast, unrecognized and unhonored. Against all this the Master inveighed. His parables of the good Samaritan and of the pharisee and publican in public worship, denounce any method of discrimination that seeks to put social prestige in the place of true moral worth.

It is the Master's great teaching concerning the commonness of all life; His insistence upon the interrelations and interdependencies of all life, and its enfoldment in the eternal Fatherhood of God, that give Him peculiar distinction among all the Oriental religionists. To an autocratic aristocracy He brought the comprehensive teaching of the brotherhood of man. What He taught He practiced; He moved with men who had lost caste and reputation among their fellows. He was contemptuously declared to be the "friend of publicans and sinners." He insisted that, occupation or place in human society, did not determine a man's fitness or unfitness to be

recognized as worthy of his fellow's confidence and esteem. The fact that one might boast of Abraham as his father, constituted nothing, unless his life witnessed to the qualities of the great patriarch. A man was not the creature of mere environment; antecedent conditions could not determine the whole trend of his future career. In enunciating such strange and heretical doctrines as these, Christ brought down upon Himself the bitter antipathy of His contemporaries. At times even the disciples could hardly sustain His declarations. What this bold reformer sought, was a larger and more comprehensive human society; He insisted upon a new basis of judgment: He aimed to develop a commonwealth here that would in some small way approximate that of the great metropolis of heaven. Christ is eminently the world's chief civilizing force, and His proposals for its betterment, though so ideal, were so capable of realization that, for nineteen centuries it has been moving forward under His divine leading.

That it shall one day move up to the perfect fulfilment of His large ideals, we surely believe, but it will come to its earlier recognition

of His philosophy when it has come to understand the intimacy of His relation to things human. Jesus Christ is not the creator of a sect or of a class whose chief occupation is with some "far-off, divine event towards which the whole creation moves." It will move with greater haste towards this final consummation, when it has learned that future bliss is built upon the sure foundations of present happiness; it will come to its higher attainment when it has accomplished here a society whose controlling maxim is expressed in the law of human brotherhood. That Christ dealt with the large policies of life, that He is intimately related to everything that means for its finer fulfilment here, is evident in His every word and action. To coördinate all its interests, to bring into helpful sympathy and coöperation all its factors, to create and develop a state whose society is built upon the sure and permanent foundations of Christian socialism, these called forth His deep concern and unfailing endeavor. When we give Christ His rightful and proper place as the world's greatest reformer we will bring Him within the range of all that concerns human affairs, and hasten that day when

the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ. The pierced hand of this divine Reformer must be felt, touching the world's every interest, and the divine conception of a real universal brotherhood must, with its revivifying power, cover the earth even as the waters cover the sea.

JESUS CHRIST—THE FRIEND

"What was His mode of sympathy with men? He did not sit down to philosophize about the progress of the species, or dream about a millennium. He gathered about Him twelve men. He formed one friendship, special, concentrated, deep. He did not give Himself out as the leader of the publican's cause or the champion of the rights of the dangerous classes. He associated with Himself Matthew, a publican called from the detested seat of custom: He went into the house of Zaccheus, and treated him like a fellow creature, a brother and a son of Abraham. His catholicity, or philanthropy, was not an abstraction, but an aggregate of personal attachments." —*Frederick W. Robertson.*

"O heart I made, a heart beats here!
Face my hands fashioned, see it in myself!
Thou hast no power nor may'st conceive of mine,
But love I gave thee, with myself to love,
And thou must love Me who have died for thee."
—*Browning.*

JESUS CHRIST—THE FRIEND

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."—St. John 15 : 13.

THE story of the world's great friendships would be the story of its great inspirations. It is the touch of a kindly hand, the encouragement of a sympathetic voice, the unfailing tenderness of a loving eye, that give to our best endeavors and finest aspirations their most splendid enrichment.

Jesus Christ was not unlike other men in His search for the love and sympathy of friendship. That He had His intimates in the town of Nazareth, that He interchanged confidences with those with whom He consorted, we may venture to believe. He was in no sense ascetic in His tendencies; the wilderness with its lonely vigils, did not fascinate Him as it did His forerunner, John the Baptist. Beginning His ministry, He called to His side certain men to be His immediate friends and confidants. With these simple

men He spent the days of that wondrous three years' ministry, making ready for the inauguration of His great kingdom on earth. To these men He committed the vast work of its organization, and to them He gave those words that constitute the basis of His whole philosophy. Into those more secret experiences of His life, where He went to the Mount of Transfiguration, or again when He came to the silence and loneliness of Gethsemane, He took with Him those of His disciples who had been nearest to Him, Peter and James and John. Few words that He ever uttered are sadder than those, when at the great crisis of His life He appeals to His friends who had so long been with Him, saying: "Will ye also go away?"

We would venture to say, that the friendship and companionship of men, as it found expression in the selection and fellowship of these peasant disciples, constitutes one of the most touching and inspiring incidents in the Master's life. It furnishes another one of those touches that serve to emphasize in His life its deep human quality. Indeed, it was upon the basis of a strong, unchanging friendship, that He laid the foundations of His system. Binding

these men to Himself and to each other, He created a band of devoted and attached followers such as the world does not contain. That His disciples were men of diverse temperaments and tendencies, that they found points of disagreement, is evident in the short but suggestive story that records their early achievements; nevertheless, so intimately had He bound them to Himself that nothing that came afterwards ever disturbed their perfect confidence in their Master. It was this unbroken unity of loyal and complete devotion that made possible the remarkable career of this band of peasant disciples.

The story of the four Gospels is not alone the story of a life isolated and remote, too awful in its majesty to be comprehended, it is as well the inspiring story of Christ's intimacy with men, His friendship for them, and His eternal sacrifice for their salvation. If the love of David and Jonathan is likened to the love of women, then by what figure shall we compare the love of Jesus Christ? It is too deep for the plummet of human imagination to fathom. In the making of His intimacies, it is interesting to note the method by which

Christ approached men. It had a singular directness about it and an element that drew men to Him and made His influence irresistible.

So persuasive was He with Andrew, that the pervading influence of the new found friendship immediately spread to his brother, Peter, and "he brought him to Jesus." Again, when He called the two brothers, James and John from their fishing nets, His appeal as well as His person were so magnetic, that they left their occupation and followed Him without delay. Meeting Matthew at the receipt of customs, active and intense with his arduous service, He speaks with so much authority the word, "follow Me," that he abandoned his occupation and took up his new found calling.

With Nathaniel, it was the strange and inexplicable character of one who could read his inmost thought, that arrested and held his attention. In each instance as He gathers about Him His singular associates, there is a power of attraction in His person and message that masters all with whom He comes in contact, and silences all question as to His authority.

Never does He give promise to these first

disciples of aught that suggests preferment in the coming kingdom; never does He present to them anything that speaks of other than a life of stern and persistent exaction.

It was a friendship that carried with it want and suffering, but whose reward was its own, and through whose ministry it was to become indissoluble. In all this ingathering of His chosen intimates, Christ wins them by the beauty of His person and the charm of His teaching. Never was there one who had less to offer of worldly preferment and more to give of worldly persecution. In the bestowing of their confidence and love upon the Nazarene, these humble men had nothing to expect in return, saving that which a really great friendship affords. That they had, in this early stage of their intimacy, any smallest conception of the majesty of His person or the vastness of His enterprise, is not even hinted at; it was the loftiness of His maxims, the regalness of His bearing, the tenderness of His love that wooed and won them. There is something suggestively strange in all this formative period of their friendship for Him: the touch of anything that hints at success or

coming power, must have been remote from their vision. Here was a fellowship that renders all comparison impossible: here was a subtle attractiveness in the person of the one who drew them, that fills us with wonderment. Jesus Christ going up and down the ways of common life, drawing to His unrecognized standard and apparently revolutionary teaching, a body of stalwart, active, business men, is one of the most suggestive incidents on the sacred page. How can it be accounted for by any other method of reasoning, than that He was the world's supreme Magnet; it is the foreshadowing of the fulfilment of His later prophecy, that He would draw all men unto Him. Because of these very intimacies with men of humble life and habit they called Him in derision, "the friend of publicans and sinners." Glorious title for the world's Master-Friend. What could these unlettered peasants add to the lustre of His person or the might of His teaching? Surely they had nothing to bring. It was evidently not for their learning or position that He called them within the circle of intimacy; it was that, out of a real, true, human friendship He might build up that larger

circle of fraternal interests which was destined to girdle the globe. This was the primary purpose of it all, but beyond this there was the satisfaction of that which even the Son of Man craved, namely, the confidence and love of His fellows. That He desired this, is evident from that touching appeal which He made to the disciples, when a dispute arose as to His identity: after asking them what the world at large thought of Him, He turned with passionate yearning to their own individual view, saying, "but whom say ye that I am?" It was upon the statement of one of these very friends that He declared the whole future of His kingdom was to rest. The Petros of the church is the confession of Simon's faith. Yes, Jesus Christ did not select men that He might draw from them the plan of His system, He did not select them that He might enrich His own philosophy; that, He wrought out in the loneliness of His own great life (and in this He is not unlike other great and masterful leaders): but He selected and chose them to their high office, that He might satisfy the cravings of a heart that had human instincts and longings.

In this aspect of His friendship for men I think there is something that is irresistible. Christ loved them because they were of Himself.

It was the same passion that controls every other human heart that found its expression in the Christ; He loved men because they were His, and because they bore the seal of divine sonship. Another aspect of His friendship, is its recognition of the worth in the *man* rather than in his environing conditions. He chose men, not for what they *had*, but for what they *were*. It was not the robe of a splendid outward appearance, nor the borrowed habit of a time-worn and faded ancestry, nor yet the acquisition of a rich competency, it was the *man*, the man in the nakedness of his real worth.

That He did not seek for His consorts in the centres of learning, that He did not draw His disciples from the courts of power, is not strange.

He was emphasizing the eternal fact, that worth is not constituted by anything that is extraneous to the man himself. The finest inspirations of all true friendship are drawn

from those who bring nothing but the rugged, native worth of a true manhood or womanhood. We can add nothing to those qualities of mind and heart with which God endues a man, that will make them more resplendent. The royalty of a splendid personality receives nothing from the robe it wears. Peter and John, the fishermen, are the incomparable disciples of the Christ. But Christ's intimacies were not confined to those who were His immediate disciples, He found men and women everywhere to whom He was peculiarly drawn. The home of Mary and Martha at Bethany was the centre of many of His choicest experiences and furnished the platform from which He gave some of the most wonderful utterances of His lips. Indeed the very atmosphere of the home life with its closely knit friendships seemed to furnish an inspiration for His message. Again, witness His evident longing for companionship and fellowship in His repeated conversations with those whose lives He touched on His pilgrimages. Wherever He was, sitting by a well, or on the dusty highway, or in the crowded streets of some city, He was ever seeking for the touch

of some other life: many of His noblest words were spoken in these apparently chance contacts. The evening when He dined with Zaccheus, at his board, must have furnished Him with peculiar satisfaction. Everywhere and with every one, Jesus reached out for the human touch; He was concerned, not about things, but about men. The very extent and variety of His contacts and the comprehensiveness of His love find expression in the ever widening circle of those with whom He found something in common. In all these instances, and we have cited but a few, we remark the enriching power of His touch upon life. Life that was ordinary and commonplace seemed to take on a new interest, the prosaic and mediocre felt the thrill of a force that was hitherto unknown; the very touch of the outer hem of His robe had virtue in it. The growth of the disciples under this benign influence, has been the wonder of the ages.

He made them so mighty that even the court of the Cæsars felt that something new had entered into human life; yes, He so inspired the genius of His followers, that the philosophers of Greece recognized in them the

forerunners of a mightier teaching than their own.

Here in this Master we find, even in His search for companions, that which compels our love and draws forth our deepest devotion. The many hours He spent in quiet, intimate conversation with these men; the interchange of views concerning the burning social and political questions of the day: the confusion and bewilderment on their part when He touched upon the secret springs of His own life work, all these were a part of the intimacy that made His person sacred and His mission divine.

We can almost follow the gradual development of the disciples' growing conception concerning Him, as at length it dawned upon them, that He with whom they talked was other than human. How in that more chosen band, comprising Peter and James and John, there must have been again and again deep musings over the singular qualities that His strange nature disclosed.

Doubtless one and all of this chosen few, would in some walk and talk alone with Him, seek for a new revelation of that power whose

very demonstrations they were the daily witnesses of, and whose singular operation they could not fathom. With perfect reasonableness we can conceive of Christ as betraying to the tender nature of John, the deeper passions of His soul, or revealing to the stalwart Peter the strong, heroic longings of His heart. To think thus of Christ is not to make Him less divine but more human, and then through His humanness to come within the range of His divinity.

It is no irreverence to say that Christ depended in a way, upon the love and loyalty of His friends; witness this on that last night when He gently rebuked their apparent indifference in the garden: "Could ye not watch with Me one hour?" Not that He needed other than the communion of His Father, but there was the satisfaction of the human nature to be met. He wanted that which we all so sorely need repeatedly through life, the touch of a kindred hand and the word of a loving lip. If we can only enter sympathetically into this Master life, we shall come to know more and more, how truly it partakes of our nature. Another splendid quality in

this friendship, that characterizes its every phase, is its unchangeableness. "And having loved His own He loved them unto the end."

Christ's life was as full of viscissitudes; as invested with all that the caprice and fickleness of man can lend to it, as any we know: He lived a life full of manifold and swift changes. He rose step by step to the great accomplishment to which He was committed; yet through it all, there is the same devotion and affection for those who were with Him from the beginning. He was as gentle and careful of these men as if they were children; He fed and nurtured and cared for them as a mother for her infant.

At the very last, when the growing agony of the cross is upon Him, He recognizes the beloved John and commends him to His mother. Where is there finer, truer love and devotion, aye, devotion that to us is utterly inexplicable, than that which He shows to His faithless disciple, Peter, on the night that he denied Him? Even Judas, faithless friend and betrayer that he is, receives no other word of condemnation than this: "Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" No

matter what the shifting action of fickle men may disclose, the friendship of the Master knows no change.

After His resurrection and His meeting with the disciples, there is no word spoken in condemnation of their apostasy ; to the absent and doubting Thomas, He comes with a special message of revelation. Few incidents are more tender than His address to this sceptic, " reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side, and be not faithless, but believing." True friendship finds its perfect exemplar here ; nothing can disturb it, nothing can alter its devotion ; it knows no changing circumstances, the flight of years serves but to quicken its impulse, the depth of suffering tends but to increase its love. If we had never known other than the story of this faultless love, we should feel that in the Master the world had discovered its highest and noblest friend. It is this consecutive, unalterable attachment of Christ for His disciples, that makes us realize the scope and depth of His sympathy for us. It is in the rôle that we love most and that we most need, that He comes to our life to-day. Not alone as its great Teacher, not alone as its

masterful Leader does Jesus Christ come to His world now, but He comes as its dearest, truest and most incomparable Friend. He enters within the inner circle of our life, touching its every experience with the warm glow of His deep love, lightening its burdens and making possible its higher accomplishments.

To effect a Brotherhood of sympathetic interests throughout the world, to bind together in closer union the scattered tribes of men, to emphasize the solidarity of the race, to make Himself the meeting place for all classes and kinds, this was the absorbing work of the Christ.

A large inclusiveness characterized His every attitude and utterance; a world of friends, this is the dream of the millennium, aye, it is the prophecy of that life that, on the cross, saw in the coming ages the fulfilment of its vast designs and over a consummated world-redemption cried, "It is finished." To hasten the reign of this Master of men means to hasten that day,

> "When man to man, the world o'er
> Shall brothers be, for a' that."

JESUS CHRIST—THE LIBERATOR

JESUS CHRIST—THE LIBERATOR

"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."—St. John 8 : 32.

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."—St. John 10 : 10.

FEW statements that fell from the lips of France's great poet and writer, Victor Hugo, are more suggestive or significant than these: "The first tree of liberty was planted eighteen centuries ago by God Himself on Golgotha. The first tree of liberty was that cross on which Jesus Christ was offered a sacrifice, for the liberty, equality and fraternity of the human race." That Jesus Christ should be accorded a place among the emancipators of men, may, on first consideration seem strange, but we venture the statement, that in no aspect of His life, other than that of His Saviourhood (and even here this aspect of His great life demands deep consideration), does He come so close to the heart of humanity, as in the rôle of the world's Liberator. That Christ did seek to bring to life something more

than the hope of an immortal existence, that He did seek to disclose something more than the way that leadeth up to Life eternal, we conceive to be evident in His every act and utterance. His great philosophy contemplates something more than a future state of bliss and seeks to lend to present environment and conditions of being, that which has to do with the betterment and larger liberty of the race. For generations, the theologians and interpreters of the Master's life have sought to lay all emphasis upon His regenerating work as it affects man's *future* existence; there has been little in all their teaching that related Christ to the things that concern men in the great struggle for existence here and now. This, we believe, more than all else, has put the Master so far away from the vision of men, that much of our present day indifference is the result. In the philosophy or theology of this great school of interpreters, there was no effort put forth to assert the wholeness of truth concerning Him, nor to emphasize the intimacy of His relation to those commoner interests of men in the every-day experiences of life.

It was this remote, and if we may venture

the phrase, this non-human God, that prompted Carlyle to call Him, the "absentee God." It was more of the God of Sinai and less of the God of Calvary, more of the God of judgment and less of the God of mercy; more of the God who ruled in some far-away and remote sphere and less of an ever present and immanent God, who marks the movement of life, from the cradle to the grave. With such a conception, it is little wonder that in due time the church and her accredited teachers came to lose much of their power, for they had violated the very fundamental principle of the incarnation. We venture the assertion, that it is the later and larger teaching concerning the place of Christ in His world, and the closer identification of human interests with those of the Divine, that is to spell out in the future, a saner, better and more effective religious habit of thought and life among the people. That Jesus Christ is the Liberator of men, that He has touched with His divine hand the chain that bound them to a past full of crude and arbitrary conceptions of God and of life's obligations, is witnessed to in every utterance and attitude of His perfect life. Coming as He did, at a

time when His own people were under the hard yoke of their Roman taskmasters ; coming as He did, at a time when so much of the beauty and refinement of life had been dispossessed by the usurpations of an autocratic and despotic power, there is something singularly fascinating in this conception of Him as the Liberator of men. What an immense reach it is from this simple Christ of Galilee, announcing the vastness of His claims, but seeking their accomplishment through the winsomeness of His gracious love, to an Augustus seated on his imperial throne at Rome and claiming the sovereignty of the world. What a suggestive line of thought we develop when we undertake to institute a comparison between this humble Master of men and those who by might of conquest left for the brief space of a few years their impress on the world. It is little wonder that, in one of those saner moments that came to him in later life, Napoleon recognized the majesty of this Christ and the enduring influence of His sceptre throughout the world.

We believe that in three conspicuous ways Christ witnesses to this high place of leader-

ship as the Liberator of men. That in many other ways He exercises this emancipating power is obvious, but here in these three departments of human life His sovereignty is complete.

First, He is the Liberator of men from the thraldom of human philosophies.

Again, He is the Liberator of men from the thraldom of fear.

And finally, He is the Liberator of men from the thraldom of sin.

St. Paul declares, that the law came by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ, and in this he enunciates what appears to us to be, a basis principle of the Incarnation. That the world at the coming of Christ was rich in its philosophies and that it had many noble and inspiring religious systems, no one would venture for an instant to dispute. The very people to whom He came, the Jews, had a system rich with the accretions of the ages and splendid with the history of an incomparable service. But, notwithstanding all this, these people had lost the genius of a true and deep religious faith; they had substituted the commandments of men for the doctrines of

God. They were seeking to satisfy themselves with mere externals, the traditions and customs of their fathers. Boasting of their noble lineage, they were the witnesses of their own degeneracy. Building the tombs of the prophets, they were the rebellious children of their murderers;—they were full of "all manner of uncleanness."

The finer genius of Greek philosophy full of a noble spiritual quality had felt the defacing and destroying touch of a grosser materialism, and the domination of a despotic Roman Empire, whose lust for power had awed the world, rendered this ancient dynasty impotent to develop the truer and nobler qualities of life. Into all this life of antagonism, Christ came; He found the world through which He moved, a world of slavery, where the full, free exercise of thought was restrained, if not wholly forbidden. Men had come to think that the day would never dawn when they should be freed from a yoke, even more galling than that of the stern Roman Empire. It was the yoke, under which so many nations have chafed, the yoke of an enforced intellectual paralysis: a state or condition of being

more destructive of all that makes for the best and truest in life, than that of physical servitude.

A shackled mind, a restrained aspiration, a forsaken hope, these are the root causes of the world's bitterness. Though a man experience impairment of physical sight as did Milton, if his mind be left free, he will catch visions of an Eternal City and enrich his race with his genius. Again, confine him within the narrow limitations of a Bedford prison, where the sunlight never penetrates, and his mind will roam at will over the broad world, like some pilgrim in quest of the soul's triumph.

Or once more, deaden his ear to the message of the human voice and to the "concord of sweet sound," and he will catch from distant spheres their music and translate it to his wondering fellows. When Jesus came to His own people, their Davids and Solomons and Isaiahs had long since ceased to be. From a period rich with poetry and pregnant with splendid philosophy, they had come to a condition of mediocrity and degeneracy; and what was true here, was largely true of Rome and Athens; the Delphic Oracle had lost the heeding ear of

the people and high Olympus was forsaken. Physical power, the aggrandizement of the state, the enthronement of the baser elements of life, the neglect of the altars of service and high consecration, these were the marks of the time. Even the philosophies, splendid as many of them were, had ceased to be operative; as organs for moral regeneration or as means to a permanent spiritual development they had signally failed. "Where there is no vision the people perish" is a truism that never loses its deep meaning. Paul's experience with the scholars of Athens on Mars Hill, is singularly suggestive of the degenerate tendency of the period. It was into this condition, that marked what the sacred chronicler describes as "the fulness of time," that Jesus Christ came with His great word, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

A "fulness of time" indeed, but one that bore witness to a fulness of *need* rather than to a fulness of accomplishment. To a world bound by tradition and custom to systems that had long since lost their virtue and power, the Christ came, bringing in His train the life abundant. He brought the only thing that

could make men free, truth, the great emancipating power in human life. Never before in the history of men, had truth prevailed with such regenerating and rejuvenating force, as at the lips of the Master Man. He was the Liberator of men from the thraldom of their false systems and philosophies. From the shackles that bound them, Christ set men free. From the slavery of human infirmities as they found expression in these religious systems, He gave to men the freedom which a divine truth insures. How this divine truth has been working through the long ages, travailing to its larger birth, let the ever advancing steps of a finer and truer civilization declare: what it has done for the bettering of human institutions, what it has done for the amelioration of the sufferings of men, what it has done for the elevation of womanhood and the protection of childhood; aye, what it has done for the world's genius in its every form and expression, let the certain voice of history repeat. Reckoning Christ by the low standards of human achievement, His work as a Liberator of the human mind places Him far in advance of the world's most splendid teachers and

philosophers. From the slavery of a half truth, He has brought the world to the realization of the whole truth; from the kindergarten period of religious development He has brought it to the larger and more advanced grades of spiritual achievement. Conceive of the vast work which this Liberator has wrought in the dark places of the earth, of the conquests He has made of superstition and idolatry, of the leavening of the habitations of cruelty by the gentle spirit of His overmastering love, and we get but a faint conception of the magnitude of His emancipation work. On and on this work has gone, hindered oftentimes by the weakness of human interpretation, restrained in its free course for a brief period by the cupidity or selfishness of its accredited exponents, but ever onward it has moved, reaching out to the remotest boundaries and making even the islands of the sea resplendent with its life-renewing touch: yes, the Liberator of men is abroad in His world, and never more completely has He dominated it than in this newer and later age. Through Him it is to come to its largest and noblest fulfilment and by His power and might it is to

reach out and up until it lays its trembling hands on the opening gates of His eternal City.

Again, Christ is the Liberator of men from the slavery of fear. The great Apostle to the Gentiles speaks of those who are all their lifetime subject to bondage through fear. The influence of fear-thought upon life is so evident as to need no demonstration here. From the earliest dawn down to the latest sunset, fear exercises a potent sway over life.

When Jesus Christ stated the supervising care of God over human life, when He emphasized the particularizing watchfulness of a love that is sensitive to the every need of our being in its largest and best development, yes, when He linked the wants of humanity with the answering love of divinity and so correlated the two, He gave to human desire a new impulse and to human want a new satisfaction. Free men from the burdening anxiety of a doubtful present and an unknown future, give to every day an objective and to time a destiny possible of attainment, and you have plucked the thorn from life's pathway and for foreboding fear substituted triumphant hope.

A life full of fear is a life full of weakness. Jesus Christ, like a great physician, placed His strong hand upon the pulse of humanity and gave assurance of a new day of larger and better life. What He gave to the man who had lain for eight and thirty years by the Pool of Bethesda, waiting in vain for the touch of the healing waters, He gives to every child of earth, if he will but receive it. Not the energy to linger longer by the miraculous spring, nor yet the power to step down for the waters' renewing touch; but a new energy to move away from the old environment of failure and weakness, out into the new country of a larger and better endeavor. To the nerveless arm He gave the thrill of His own divine energy; to the sightless eye, the illumination of His own divine vision; to the deaf ear, a newer and clearer avenue to the soul penetrated by His own divine voice; and to the impotent and paralyzed body, the irresistible power of His own perfect manhood. Yes, Jesus Christ dispossessed fear and in its stead placed a reassuring and triumphant hope. To teach men concerning their daily needs, that their Heavenly Father was conscious of

their requirements, and was "touched with the feeling" of their infirmities, that He was not an "absentee God," meant to rob them of the blight of anxiety and to assure them of the sovereign care and love of their great Father.

Again, it was to teach them that the sunset of life was but the later glow of a larger fulfilment, and that the night, however dark, was but the precursor of a fairer and brighter morning. All this was designed to give peace where care had been, and to make every discipline a new teacher to bring men nearer to the Father's home. To lie down in quiet slumber and to awake again to the clear call of the watchman,—"All is well," and then to know that after seas are over and the haven reached, we shall

"See our Pilot face to face;"

this means to lend to life the transfiguring power of Him who said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

Upon such an assurance, the very sting of death is drawn, and the gates of a new life,

without fear, swing open wide to every tired pilgrim of earth.

And finally, Jesus Christ freed men from the thraldom of sin. This was the proud boast of St. Paul after his own emancipation: he was freer even in his chains as Nero's prisoner, than the Roman guard who watched at his side; yes, freer than the proud Emperor seated on his throne. Alexander, master as he was of empires, was the slave and victim of his own sin which destroyed him. From a curse, more awful than that of bondmen, Jesus Christ came to set men free. To arouse the better nature so long dormant, to whisper in the ear of the despairing the word of a new hope; to tell men even in the face of every discouragement and failure, of the unfulfilled possibilities that lay before them, yes, to render the weakling strong to slay his Goliath of passion and lust, this was the conquering work of Jesus Christ. The story of the New Testament is the story of the conquest of sin and the reclamation of life: it is no mere recital of impossible characters seeking impossible ends. The Christ knew what was in man; He penetrated beneath his rough exterior and

disclosed the latent capacities within. Not with an eye of doubt and fear, but with an eye of hope and encouragement He called forth from the selfish and brutal Saul the mighty and aggressive Paul. Again, He re-created a band of faithless and apostate disciples, and made of them a body of invincible might and energy. A fallen and deserted creature, He lifted from the degradation of deepest despair and gave to her the rejuvenating power of a wholesome and restored life. The operation of this emancipating power, is the mightiest miracle of the New Testament, as it is the greatest gift of the divine Saviour. What it has done for the race in bringing it to a larger and fuller life, every forward movement triumphantly proclaims. Step by step, man has come under this inspiring and regenerating influence and been brought to know his high sovereignty over his own nature. On the throne of the will, where once a weak and vacillating volition was seated, is enthroned a supreme and masterful power.

From the serfdom of yielding passion, we have, through Christ the Liberator, come to

the large freedom of the more abundant life. So strong is this Christ-emancipated man, that the combined forces of evil cannot overthrow him. In the fulness of his conscious power, he walks as a freedman in the courts of earth and comes at length to be a prince in the higher courts of heaven. The identification of God in Christ with the life of humanity is the fulfilled dream of the ages; but the emancipating power of the Master, freeing His children from a bondage too heavy to be borne and giving them the larger liberty of the sons of God, is the culminating ideal of the incarnation. That this Saviour of men is abroad in His world to-day, and that His touch is on the hearts of men as never before, we believe to be demonstrably true. As the world's great Liberator, He is to come at length to His place of complete supremacy and lift humanity up to the heights of an attainment where it shall be more completely a partaker of the divine nature.

JESUS CHRIST—THE SAVIOUR

"The relegation of life to some distant future, and the separation of the holy man from the virtuous man, are the signs of a false religious conception." —*Amiel.*

"The Gospel is no mere book, but a living creature, with a vigor, a power which conquers all that opposes it. The soul, charmed with the beauty of the Gospel, is no longer its own. God possesses it entirely; He directs its thought and faculties; it is His:—what a proof of the divinity of Christ. He is a conqueror who draws men to Himself for their highest good; who unites to Himself, incorporates into Himself, not a nation, but the whole human race."

—*Napoleon.*

"The more abundant life, the life full of completion haunts us all, we feel the thing we ought to be beating beneath the thing we are." —*Phillips Brooks.*

"Jesus Christ is the greatest name in history. There are others for which men have died. His is the only one worshiped among all peoples of all races in all ages."

—*Père Didon.*

JESUS CHRIST—THE SAVIOUR

"There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."—ACTS 4 : 12.

"This is indeed the Christ,—the Saviour of the world."—ST. JOHN 4 : 42.

THERE are many names or designations of Christ that give Him the high place of distinction in certain spheres of action, but none is so universal or comprehensive as this one,—Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. Thus to characterize Him, is to admit His divinity, for so extensive and sublime an accomplishment must imply something more than that which human genius can furnish. No man has ever essayed to be more than the saviour of a race or of a nation of men; no one has ever undertaken to play the rôle of the world's Redeemer, saving Jesus of Nazareth. Dealing as He does with every interest of life in its present environment and condition, Jesus again and again declares His power to save the world universal. As a Jewish Teacher and Reformer, as the creator of a

sect or party, He displays a marvelous genius and power; but not in any or all of these aspects of His life, does He engage the attention of the world, as its Saviour. The declarations He makes concerning His oneness with the Father, may be but the expression of a deeper and fuller consciousness of the indwelling of that divinity of which every man is a partaker; but His declarations, wherein He expressly states His control over all life, these are the positive tokens of His divinity.

How can we understand such an utterance as, "I give unto them eternal life," by any other standard than that of His Godhead? What boldness, nay, what seeming audacity and unwarranted authority do these and other words of His imply, when we seek to measure Him by the standards of human greatness and power. Jesus is never so completely divine, He is never so truly majestic, as when He thus declares the limitless extent of His power. We have often tried to imagine Him as nothing more than the greater embodiment and expression of the eternal Father's mind and heart, the express image of His person; the highest type of the realized perfect man: but we have

been embarrassed when we came to these strange and awful utterances of His that declare in such positive ways His mastership over all life. If Jesus is but a perfect type of life, if He is but a great teacher who is to be classified with other great exponents and expounders of truth; nay, if He is but a Redeemer and Restorer of the truer and the better life in this present world, then there is a confusion and a difficulty in many of His utterances that render Him utterly beyond our comprehension and adoration. Either Jesus Christ is what, in His greater utterances He declared Himself to be, or else there is an incongruity and inconsistency in His whole philosophy. It was a strange position which the French encyclopedists took, when they gave Christ such an exalted place, such an incomparable distinction among all the world's teachers and philosophers, and yet denied to Him His essential characteristic, namely, His divinity. To call Him the "divinest symbol of perfection," or the "holiest of men," and to acknowledge His supreme place among all the great leaders of thought, is not sufficient. If He "lifted the gates of empire from their

hinges, and turned the streams of centuries from their courses," then He did it, not because He was supremely human, but because He was eternally divine.

Jesus announced Himself to be the world's Saviour, He emphatically stated that in Himself were to be found the healing palliatives for the world's ills. It was not to usher in some new and original philosophy, or to create some new cult, that engaged the thought of this Master-man. He bent every energy of His divine life to the one great end of saving humanity. He was not some Hebrew Messiah seeking the restoration of an ancient kingdom; He was not some Liberator come to unshackle an enslaved race; He was a world Redeemer, whose message and whose work had to do with all forms and phases of life the world over. Saviourhood implies divinity. Even the distinguished Unitarian, Dr. Channing, is compelled to break for the time with his church's doctrine where he says: "I confess when I escape the deadening power of habit, and can receive the full import of such passages as the following: 'Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you

rest': 'I am come to seek and to save that which was lost:' 'In My Father's house are many mansions, I go to prepare a place for you:' I say, when I can succeed in realizing the import of such passages, I feel myself listening to a being such as never before and never since spoke in human language. I am awed by the consciousness of greatness which these simple words express; and when I connect this greatness with the proofs of Christ's miracles, I am compelled to speak with the centurion, 'truly this was the Son of God.'" Says the late Dean Liddon, "if Jesus Christ is not God, can we even say that He is sincere?" And then he goes on to indicate what must have been the awful consciousness of this Perfect Man when the fact of an evident imposture dawned upon Him. Even Rousseau is compelled to declare his deeper conviction, in his estimate of Christ: "If the life and death of Socrates," said he, "be those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus Christ are those of a God."

Comparing the Master with all the great leaders of time, Napoleon concluded his summary with those ever memorable words, which the French preacher Lacordaire said ought to

be carved upon his tomb: "In fine, I know men, and I say that Jesus Christ was not a man."

It is a striking but incontrovertible fact that, whenever an assault has been made upon the citadel of Christian faith and the doctrine of Christ's Saviourhood attacked, among its conspicuous and faithful defenders have been these very men who under other conditions rendered no allegiance to His claims. The world will not long tolerate any exposition that treats with flippant unconcern the rightful preëminence of the Master, nor will it have any substitute for this Divine Leader. Tennyson expressed the deep conviction of humanity in his lines:

> "Thou seemest human and divine,
> The highest, holiest manhood Thou;
> Our wills are ours, we know not why,
> Our wills are ours, to make them Thine."

Complicated and complex as much of our theological teaching may be, remote as we have made Christ from the intelligence of men, one thing we may not and cannot do, separate Him from those interests that relate Him to man's salvation. Jesus positively de-

clared Himself to be the Saviour of men, and His whole life is in demonstration of this declaration.

"Whosoever believeth on Me *hath* everlasting life." "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." Not only to give to men a new and finer system of philosophy setting forth the relations between man and man; not only to set up some new system of statecraft, such as that which the great Chinese philosopher Confucius gave to his people; but to give them first and foremost the guarantee of an eternal existence, this was the purpose of the advent of the Son of God. No matter what else Jesus of Nazareth may or may not be, He is, by His own assertion, the Saviour of men.

In Him the guesses of the ages find fulfilment; in Him the dark riddles of the grave find their great and final answer. When Jesus hung upon the cross and closed His eyes in the sleep of death, the world passed into its eclipse and its sun was darkened. If ever defeat seemed more apparent than here, we have failed to disclose it; but when after the

brief space of three days He came forth from the tomb, the first-fruits of them that slept, the world passed out into its new morning of eternal sunshine.

Over against a cross of defeat stands an open tomb of victory. That the new power of a resurrected Master dominated the early church and lent to it such courage and persistence that it triumphed over every difficulty, is the testimony of contemporaneous history. Men that were hitherto weak and vacillating were made strong and valiant; an energy that even the most critical and skeptical must recognize, effected results that every historian from that day to this has taken cognizance of and recorded. Leckey declares that some new and singular power, indefinable in its scope and character entered into human life at this time and lent to it an irresistible impulse. It was the power of His Saviourhood.

Jesus came to give to life here a new aspect and to furnish it with a new motive, but He effected this by enduing it with a new power, the power of an endless life. He rendered the present more fascinating and inspiring by insuring the permanence of being. The immor-

tality of genius received its warrant at the hands of this risen Christ. If life is influenced by its environment and antecedent conditions, then it is influenced still more largely by that to which it aspires. We are like the thing we seek—determine the destination, the great objective of life, and we determine the method of accomplishing it. Fix life's ideals, and we set in motion the means to attain them. Measure its span by some human standards, where its rising and its setting are determined by the rising and the setting sun, and its aims will be those that find their realization within the compass of time.

Again, measure life by the standards fixed by the world's Redeemer, and we find its aims reaching out beyond the outmost boundaries of time and sense. Before the Master gave to human life its new aspect, it was wholly occupied with things transient, after He touched it with His own renewing power, its consuming desire was to pursue the things eternal.

He satisfied the deepest hunger and yearning of the human heart, for

> "'Tis life whereof our souls are scant,
> More life and fuller that we want."

To study and to think and to plan and to work as those who have the assurance of the larger life, lightens life's burdens and furnishes an inspiration to all endeavor. To know that days and years are but the designations of a limited present and the precursors of an unlimited future, where all that we are or hope to be shall burst into flower, illuminates the darkest night and lends a peculiar charm to the most burdensome task.

From dawn to sunset we cry for more life, and the only voice that has spoken with authority and assurance concerning this desire, is the voice of Him who said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Here, in the presence of this Saviour of men, honest doubt submits itself to Him,

"Believing where it cannot prove."

But quite aside from these renewing touches which He gave to life, we believe He made it more resplendent in its living. Say what we may, there is a something which the consciousness of His Saviourhood lends to life that is utterly beyond our capacity to analyze. To feel and know that through Him we are in

some way related to the eternal, that the things about us spell out the unending lesson of His love, that every flower that greets us on our pilgrimage is charged with a message from Him; that every star swinging in space reflects the eternal light of His presence, this is to enrich and beautify life and to exalt it, till its every breath drinks in the purer airs of heaven. Is not this the larger meaning of the more abundant life? Is there anything that can compare even remotely with the thought taught by His great life, namely, that with Him we are even now partakers of the Father's bounty? To believe in Christ's Saviourhood and then to live a life tinctured with bitterness, to catch a glimpse of His sunshine and then to look only for clouds, to see the beauty of His smile and then to be ever frowning, is a mockery and a delusion. A world of men and women with the first glow of the eternal life upon them, upon whose faces there can be no shadow of departing day, this is the design and eternal purpose of His blessed ministry. Christ's Saviourhood is one that has to do, not with graves and tombs, but with the habitations of the living; He begins His divine proc-

esses here, and then amplifies them hereafter. He is not alone the Master waiting at the end of the road and at the close of the day to give the word of "well done," or the reward of faithful service;—He is ever with us on the pilgrimage, speaking to us again and again the word of good cheer and encouragement. What a monstrous conception was that which made this Saviour a sort of hard and exacting Taskmaster, meting out to the wicked or unfortunate, the awful penalties for their indiscretions, and giving only to a few of the more favored and less tempted, the rewards of His eternal bliss. No, this is not the Christ of the Evangel, it is a caricature of His blessed person.

Jesus Christ is the Saviour of all life; the benison of His peace is found at every turning of the way. To possess this precious boon is the privilege of all who will but seek for His presence on the great highways of life. And what of the future does this gracious life reveal? Simply and yet profoundly this: "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life, no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." To open the way that leadeth up to life eternal, to

make it so plain that the simplest may find it; was not this the final end and aim of the ministry of this man of Nazareth? To soften the hard pillow of a deep and shadowy night with the promise of a sure and glorious to-morrow, was not this the assurance and guarantee He came to give? Did He not treat this enigma of time as one who spoke out of the sure ground of certitude?

Is there not an inspiration which His Saviourhood lends to the gloom and sorrow of the tomb? What a vesture of light He throws about death and the grave.

The effect of this saving power of Christ upon life, we cannot even faintly conjecture. He is not the Saviour of a State or of a race, but of the individual. His whole ministry was largely with the individual, as if to emphasize the personal element in His saving power.

What would it mean to bring this saving Christ down into the purlieus and dark lanes and alleys of our great centres of population? What would it mean to have the pierced hand of this Master laid upon those throbbing centres of intense life where men and women are contending for the ephemeral things

that perish with the using? What a process of renovation it would mean; what a renewal of life and hope it would yield. What this old world is sighing for to-day, what it has ever sighed for, is the presence of its Saviour. The consciousness with which the dying Tennyson went out with the certainty of meeting his Pilot face to face when he had crossed the bar, this we say is the longing desire of every human heart in its deeper musings and yearnings. We are all waiting for those renewals of life that make every morning speak of that final and eternal day, when the sun shall never set. We are all pushing on and up to those heights where we catch the broader sweep of view and see those happy vales that are fairer than those the poet dreams of in his storied Elysium. To know there is an eye will mark our coming and a hand will reach to greet us, what a glow this lends to all the tasks and disappointments of life. The dullest mortal that lives feels the new pulsings of a power that flows from the life of the Saviour Christ, and looking up out of his narrow and limited sphere of action, stretches forth his palm to receive the gift He brings. The man at his

tasks, overburdened with care and bowing beneath the load, hears the message of this Saviour of men, and stiffening his back to the burden, presses on in the hope of a newer and brighter day: the mourner in his deep and awful sorrow, sees only the wreck of his hopes and the ruin of his fairest desires, but when he hears the word of divine triumph fall from the lips of the risen Saviour, lifts his head above the lowering clouds to greet the sun. All life finds its best illumination and transfigurement at the feet of its mighty Master. The workman, the teacher, the reformer, the friend; yes, in all these aspects of His transcendent life, He is spelling out the deep and subtle meaning of His wondrous message: but in no aspect of His sacred life is He more appealing or triumphant, than in that of the world's Saviour.

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